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TWENTY-SIX COMMON BIRDS.

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To accompany Audubon Bird Chart.

Published by Massachusetts Audubon Society, 234 Berkeley St., Boston.

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TWENTY-SIX COMMON BIRDS

BY

RALPH HOFFMANN,

TO ACCOMPANY

AUDUBON BIRD CHARTS.

PUBLISHED BY MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY,

234 BERKELEY STREET, BOSTON.

1899.

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TWENTY-SIX COMMON BIRDS.

This pamphlet is issued by the Massachusetts Audubon Society, for the Protection of Birds, to accompany its Wall Chart of colored drawings of twenty-six common birds. The objects of the society are to discourage the wearing of feathers, except those of the ostrich and domesticated fowls; to establish a Bird Day in conjunction with Arbor Day in the schools; to promote the knowledge of birds in the community and to protect all wild birds and their eggs from needless destruction. The society circulates good literature on the subject, and accurate illustrations of birds. It seeks new members. A new member is added strength for necessary work, and is one more person interested to reform the fashion of wearing feathers of wild birds. The society's publication, "Helps to Bird Study," was favorably received, and it is hoped that this leaflet and the chart will be of further assistance to teachers. The chart should be hung in a conspicuous place on the wall, so that the birds, by inviting constant examination, will become familiar. It should be used to supplement Nature work and general reading whenever convenient.

The society is indebted to Mr. Ralph Hoffmann, of Belmont, Mass., for the descriptions of the birds found in this pamphlet, and for his valuable assistance in supervising the preparation of the chart. The illustrations on the chart have been especially drawn for the society by Mr. E. Knobel. The number following the common name of the bird is the number of that bird on the chart.

Size of Chart, 29 x 42 inches, printed on heavy paper. Price, unmounted, $1.00; backed with cloth and mounted on rollers like a map, $1.30.

If its sale indicates that it meets a need and serves to promote the public appreciation of birds, it is proposed to issue a second chart with figures of additional species. The two charts will illustrate all the species commonly observed. Orders for the chart should be addressed to the Prang Educational Company, Washington Street, Boston. For information regarding the society, address the secretary, Miss Harriet E. Richards, care of Boston Society of Natural History, 234 Berkeley Street, Boston.

DOWNY WOODPECKER. 18.

[DRYOBATES PUBESCENS.]

This little woodpecker is the commonest of his family, if we except the Flicker, whose habits have become in many ways abnormal. The Downy spends its life on the trunks and large limbs of trees, going up or down, clinging to the upper or under surface of a limb with equal ease, always keeping its head, however, toward the upper end of the branch or tree. Its long barbed tongue enables it to transfix and pull out the grubs whose hiding places its bill has laid open. The bill is also used to sound its call in spring, beating a sonorous tattoo on some dry resonant limb. In May, when the bird has paired, a round opening is cut into a dead limb and a nesting place hollowed out within. Here on the chips are laid four or five pure white eggs. The Downy spends the winter in New England, often associated at this season with the Chickadees, Kinglets, and Nuthatches on their tour of inspection through woodland and village. It may be attracted to the vicinity of a house by a bone hung to a limb; from this it will pick the last vestige of meat or gristle. The male may be distinguished from the female by the scarlet patch in the crown. The love call is the tattoo above described; the bird has also a short laugh and a sharp *chick*.

FLICKER. 19.

[COLAPTES AURATUS.]

The handsome Golden-Winged Woodpecker, or Flicker, is the largest of our common Woodpeckers, but unlike the rest of its family it feeds to a considerable extent on the ground. Its bill, too, is not as blunt and powerful as those of the other Woodpeckers. The Flicker can, however, cut out a cavity in a fairly hard piece of wood, and its nesting habits are similar to those of the Downy

Woodpecker. The same cavity is often used year after year, and in it six or more pure white eggs are laid in May. The young are fed by regurgitation, the adult thrusting its bill into the mouth of the young and pumping up the food in a liquid form. The cries of the young at this time are remarkably like the hissing of snakes. Two broods are often raised, so that the loud mating call, *wick-wick-wick*, which is so characteristic of March and April, is heard again in July. Beside this call, the Flicker drums on a limb or any resonant substance, and birds when together utter a soft *yucka, yucka*. The ordinary call of the bird is a sharp *ti-ou*. A few Flickers winter in southern New England, especially near the coast. At this season they live on berries, being often seen on the poison ivy vines. In the summer and fall their chief food consists of ants, which they find on the ground, spearing them one after another with their long, sticky tongue. They eat, also, other insects which they find on the ground or in trees. Their flight is very characteristic: a stroke of the powerful wings gives the bird an upward motion; he then falls, rising again after another stroke. When the bird is seen near by, the golden shafts under the wings are very noticeable, and when the bird flies away from the observer, the large white spot at the junction of the tail and body is a characteristic mark.

CHIMNEY SWIFT. 1.

[CHÆTURA PELAGICA.]

This curious bird, resembling the Swallows in so many ways, differs essentially from them in structure and is classed by naturalists in another family. Before the construction of chimneys the Swift built in hollow trees; in remote parts of the country some still retain this habit. The nest is built of dead twigs which the bird seizes while flying, and glues together by means of its saliva. On this platform are laid from four to five pure white eggs. The twittering of the young and their unfortunate appearance at the wrong end of the chimney, are recollections of most country-bred children. After leaving the nests, the Swifts spend the greater

part of their life on the wing, but unlike the swallows, they are not seen to rest on wires or fences; at night they support themselves in chimneys or hollow trees, while by day they are continually in the air, where they pursue with astonishing dexterity the insects which constitute their food. The tail feathers of the Swift end in spiny points, and assist it in climbing, while the feet are so small and weak that the Swift is almost incapable of perching or walking. The sexes are alike. The note is an emphatic *chip*, either slowly or rapidly repeated. The Swifts may be distinguished from any swallow by their peculiar flight, and from the absence of the forked tail. This when closed appears cigar-shaped, but when the bird turns it is spread like a fan. The Swift winters outside the United States returning to New England early in May.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMING BIRD. 9.

[TROCHILUS COLUBRIS.]

Humming Birds are confined to the New World, in the tropical portions of which they are extremely numerous. In the Eastern United States there occurs only one species, the one figured in the chart. The belief that there are more than one species, is due to confusion arising from the differences in the sexes. The female lacks the ruby throat. Humming Birds reach New England early in May and leave in September, wintering outside the limits of our country. The apparent frailty of this bird, the metallic lustre of its colors, its silence and rapid flight, distinguish it from all other birds. A sight of its nest is a rare treat. The daintiest material is used in its construction and great skill shown in concealing the structure from observation. The nest is cup-shaped, but not more than half an inch deep, and composed of down and fern, so coated with gray lichens, that it closely resembles the branch on which it is saddled. Two eggs are laid, pure white in color and half an inch long. The female feeds the young by thrusting her bill into that of the young birds, and forcing the food, which she has converted into a liquid state, into their stomachs. The process has

been described as a strange and extremely startling spectacle. The male does not apparently assist the female in her labor. Both sexes show great courage, and the males display irritability and pugnacity toward each other, though when captured they become in a short time very tame. They feed in captivity on sugar water, though their visits to flowers are made to procure not only the honey, but also the small insects which the honey attracts.

KINGBIRD. 13.

[TYRANNUS TYRANNUS.]

The Kingbird arrives in May and leaves New England late in August, few being seen in September. It is not quite as domestic as the Phœbe, preferring orchards and fields to the vicinity of the barn. It perches on the top of a fruit tree, on posts or tall weeds, and from this point of vantage, pursues and captures the insects that fly near. The click of its bill may be heard some distance away. The nest is usually placed in a fruit tree, and little pains are taken to conceal it. It is composed of twigs, loosely laid together, and often festooned with white strings or the dried fruit of the Mouse-ear Everlasting. The inside of the nest is neatly lined with feathers and horsehair, or roots, and contains from four to five white eggs spotted with brown. While the nest is occupied, the Kingbirds guard the neighborhood with unusual vigilance, and pugnacity, driving off with shrill clamor and even with blows, all intruders, but particularly Crows. A sharp twitter is the Kingbird's only note, and even constitutes his attempts at song, when in the mating season he takes prolonged upward flights, repeating this shrill squeaking. The sexes are practically alike, though the male has a concealed crown patch of scarlet. The Kingbird has often been accused of destroying Honey Bees; even allowing that individuals occasionally do some damage in this way, the good services of the race far outweigh these injuries, and the remedy is to drive the bird away from the hives, not to kill it.

BLUEJAY. 17.

[CYANOCITTA CRISTATA.]

The Blue Jay like its relatives the Crow, and the Magpie, is a mixture of clown, thief, and good fellow. Its amusing ways, bright colors, and the cheerful cries with which it enlivens the bleak winter woods, win for it a pardon for its undoubted destruction of other bird's eggs. In winter the Jays live chiefly on acorns, beechnuts and grain, although fruit and insects form part of its fare in summer. This variety of diet enables many to spend the winter in the north, though many more move to the southward; they are therefore most abundant in New England in the fall. The nest is generally placed in an evergreen tree not far from the ground, and is roughly constructed of twigs and roots. On a lining of fine roots are laid four or five brownish or greenish eggs, spotted with yellowish brown. The sexes and young resemble each other. The notes of the Jay are very varied, but among his common cries is one resembling the quavering call of the Red-Shouldered Hawk, another which may be likened to the squeak of a rusty wheelbarrow, and the trumpet call, of *djay*, *djay*, often uttered on the wing. The Jay has also some soft pleasing notes. When uttering a cry, the Jay gesticulates in a curious manner, or hops from one bough to the next above. The Jays are rarely seen on the ground or in open country, and are always very alert, and either steal very silently away at the approach of man, or set up a screaming which alarms the whole woodland. Owls and Hawks are often annoyed by Jays, who flock together from all parts of the wood to insult their enemy.

BOBOLINK. 4.

[DOLICHONYX ORYZIVORUS.]

The Bobolink reaches New England in the first week in May, but is associated more closely with June, when each grassy field is enlivened by the bright plumage of the males and their inimit-

able song. The female is very inconspicuously dressed in brown and yellowish, and the males also acquire these colors by the end of August, so that the great flocks which congregate in the southern reed and rice fields are made up solely of silent, plain-colored marauders. The migration is accomplished at night, and the mellow *chink* which is the bird's call note is clearly distinguished in the silence of the night. The winter is spent in southern and central America. The Bobolink is classed with the Blackbird and Oriole, though his bill is shorter than that of most of the family. His tail is particularly adapted for life on the stalks of grasses and reeds, The Bobolink's nest is placed in the grass, and consists merely of a bedding of withered grass, on which are laid from four to six grayish or brownish-white eggs, marked with dull dark brown. Its food in summer consists of spiders, crickets and other insects, but as soon as the seeds of the wild oats and the larger grasses ripen, the Bobolinks subsist on them. This diet and the rice further south makes them very fat. Thousands of them are now shot and sold in the markets, to those only, let us hope, who have never known the Bobolink in June. It would be a crime to kill a Bobolink in full song, in New England. In a southern rice field it is an unfortunate necessity. If the bird is protected in the breeding season, it will probably hold its own, notwithstanding the annual attacks on the fall migrants.

RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD. 15.

[AGELÆUS PHŒNICEUS.]

This Starling, like many of its family, spends the greater part of the year in large flocks, which in former times were supposed to inflict great damage on crops and were persecuted accordingly. The defenders of the bird have, however, demonstrated that the number of noxious insects which the bird destroys more than offsets the damage it does. In New England, moreover, its life is chiefly passed in swamps, and along the margins of streams, and its food here consists almost entirely of insects. The males arrive

first in small companies. The earliest token of spring is often the sight, in March, of a flock of Blackbirds, rising and falling as they fly, or the sound of their voices from some tall tree, mingling their flutings, whistlings and gurglings into a melodious harmony. The females are dark brown above, streaked with lighter color, whitish below, streaked with darker color. When these arrive and the birds have paired, a site is selected for the nest, generally in some low bush or tussock in wet ground. The nest is constructed early in May, and the birds show great skill in weaving long dry sedges for the framework. The eggs, from three to four in number, are white, faintly tinged with blue, and curiously scrawled with dark brown lines. Besides the *okalée* or *congarée* of the male, both sexes have a *chuck*, a long whistle and a curious chatter when distressed. The bird is very noisy, particularly when the nest is approached, and toward evening, when numbers resort to a bed of reeds for the night. A few birds winter in southern New England, but the majority pass into the southern states.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE. 14.

[ICTERUS GALBULA.]

The Oriole is the handsomest, and except the Bobolink, the best known of our starlings. Its beautiful and skillfully constructed nest, hung at our very doors, its startling colors and fine whistling notes attract the attention and win the favor of all. The Oriole reaches New England in early May; the males precede the females by a day or two, and dash at once into the blossoming cherry trees. Their food at this time is made up of insects which they seize in the buds and blossoms of trees. Later they devour and feed to their young quantities of soft-bodied caterpillars, canker worms, etc. Let us not forget these services, nor begrudge them the few green peas which they steal. The arrival of the female is followed by the selection of a nesting site and the construction of the nest. The tree on which the faded nest of the previous season still dangles,

is often chosen for the new nest. Sometimes three nests of different years hang side by side. It is unnecessary to describe the search for fibrous material, the skillful and patient weaving, or the noisy encouragement of the male; the nest finally hangs complete, of a beautiful color, which soon changes to weatherbeaten gray. In this are laid from four to six eggs, dull white, blotched with dark brown, which hatch in June; toward the end of the month the peevish cry of the young is a characteristic note. The young, which, like the female, are smaller and paler than the male, are out in July, and by the end of August the Orioles leave us for Central America.

PURPLE FINCH. 2.

[CARPODACUS PURPUREUS.]

This handsome and attractive bird has won a place in our affections by its beauty, by the sweetness and power of its song, and by its confidence in building its nest near us. Except in the breeding season Purple Finches are to be found in roving bands, attracted, doubtless, to this region and that by the destribution of the berries which form their favorite food. In the summer they eat insects and fruit, in the fall the berries of the mountain ash and the honeysuckle, and in winter the fruit of juniper, hemlock, hornbeam and spruces. In the spring they feed on buds, and have been accused of doing damage at this season to the trees; it has not, however, been satisfactorily shown either that they injure the trees or reduce the crop. The nest of the Purple Finch is built of coarse fibrous material, and is placed in the fork of a limb from five to twenty feet from the ground. Evergreen trees in the vicinity of houses are favorite nesting places. The bird lays four or five eggs of pale greenish, lightly marked with specks and scrawls of lilac and black. Two broods are often raised. The female and young resemble their relatives, the sparrows, in the brown streakings with which they are marked. The thick bill and a white line over the eye, as well as the deeply forked tail, will help

to distinguish them. Young males often pair while still in this plumage, so that the song is heard from other than the red birds. The males sing from the first warm days at the close of winter, but their rapture in the mating season is too great for even the wildest outbursts of song to express. They pursue each other in full song, or fly up and down before the female, pouring out a rapid series of extremely sweet warbling notes. Both sexes have a call note, *tship-tchee* and a sharp *sitt*, *sitt*, uttered when flying. A few flocks retire to the southward, but many spend the winter in New England. Migrant birds reach New England in early April.

AMERICAN GOLDFINCH. 25.

[SPINUS TRISTIS.]

This lively and cheerful bird is well-known under the several names, American Canary, Yellowbird and Thistlebird. In the female and young, the bright yellow of the male is replaced by an olive brown, and they lack his black cap. The Goldfinches, like the Purple Finches, spend the greater part of the year in roving flocks, some of which remain in New England all winter; the male at this season resembles the female. Their food consists at all seasons of seeds, some of which they shell with great skill. Dandelions and thistles attract them to the lawns and pastures, sunflowers and bachelor's buttons to the gardens. In winter they visit the weeds that stand above the snow, the birches and the pines, and at all seasons they evince by their sweet notes and playful ways a lively disposition which has won them many friends. They are the last of our birds to think of nesting, although they are here in early spring. They spend in music and frolic the months when the other birds are busily constructing their nests, and it is not till July that they select some shade or orchard tree, and place in a crotch, from five to twenty feet from the ground, a neat nest, deep and cup-shaped, built of fine material and lined with thistle down. In this are laid five or six bluish white eggs.

The song is irregular, not strong but very sweet. Their call note, *chee-wee* is like that of a canary, and when they fly, they often mark the waves which the line of their flight assumes, by a succession of notes, resembling the syllables *chi-chi-cheet-ee.* The young Goldfinches have a characteristic plaintive note, which is first noticeable in August, and continues to be heard well into September.

CHIPPING SPARROW. 26.

[SPIZELLA SOCIALIS.]

One writer has proposed for this bird the name "Door-yard sparrow," so familiarly does the bird frequent the yards of our houses. It has been possible to induce it to enter the house by luring it with crumbs, and there is no doubt that if its habits led it to spend the severe winters with us, it would accept our hospitality as readily as the Redbreast does abroad. But in October, it leaves New England for the Middle States, returning in early April. It soon builds its nest, rarely far from a dwelling, sometimes in apple trees but generally in low bushes. The nest is composed of fine roots and lined with hair. It contains four eggs of a light bluish green, with dark purple and black markings about the large end. A second brood is raised during the summer. The sexes are alike, but the young birds have streaked breasts and lack the chestnut crowns. The Chipping Sparrow, like the Song Sparrow, gathers much of its food, especially in the fall, winter, and spring from the ground, in the form of seeds, often those of injurious weeds and grasses; in summer, insects form a large addition to its bill of fare, many noxious moths being skillfully seized even on the wing. The bird's call note has given it his name; even its song is little more than a repetition of the syllables *chip*, *chip*, *chip*, dry and monotonous enough except from the association which this humble tenant has with our childhood, when we too were "dooryard" creatures.

SONG SPARROW. 22.

[MELOSPIZA FASCIATA.]

In all open country, but particularly where water and bushes abound, this sparrow builds its humble nest, and sings its lively song. It is one of the first to welcome spring, reaching New England in March, and mounting to the top of a bush or small tree, to repeat with astonishing persistence its simple but welcome song. It feeds on the ground, gathering the seeds of weeds and grasses, rarely venturing far from cover, in which it hides with the skill of the mouse. In winter, brush heaps or the tangled grass of swamps shelter a few Song Sparrows in southern New England, but the bulk of the family retire to the Middle States. The nest is built in April, and is generally placed in some tuft of grass or hollow on the ground, less often in a small tree. The eggs, four or five in number, are greenish white, varying greatly in their markings, which range from brown to reddish, and lavender to purple. Two broods are raised. The sexes are alike, and the young resemble the adult. This is the common Sparrow whose breast is streaked, as the Chipping Sparrow is the common ashy-breasted Sparrow. The Song Sparrow may be known by his nervous flight, in which the long tail is constantly jerked, and by his shyness, which prompts him on the least alarm to retreat into cover. Beside the song, which varies very greatly with individuals and even with the same bird, the Song Sparrow has an alarm note, *chŭck*, and a call note, *cheep*.

SCARLET TANAGER. 12.

[PIRANGA ERYTHROMELAS.]

This handsome bird is commoner than is generally supposed. Its summer is spent in the leafy tops of oak forests, and its somewhat sluggish disposition aids in keeping it from our observation. The guttural call, *tschip*, *tschurr*, used by both sexes is often the only thing that calls attention to it, or to its plainer colored

mate. In the fall the scarlet of the male is replaced by the olive and greenish yellow of the female and young, but he may be distinguished by his black wings. The Tanagers arrive in May, and the pair soon select the site for their nest, generally in oaks, but occasionally in orchard trees or evergreens. The nest, loosely built of straw and twigs, is generally placed from ten to thirty feet from the ground and contains three or four eggs of a light greenish blue, marked with brown and lilac. The Tanager's food consists chiefly of insects. The song resembles that of a Robin, but is much hoarser. The Tanagers leave us in early September and pass outside the limits of the United States to spend the winter.

BARN SWALLOW. 3.

[HIRUNDO ERYTHROGASTRA.]

This swallow is easily distinguished from its relatives by its deeply forked tail. The female is less brightly colored than the male, and the young lack the long outer tail feathers. The Barn Swallows arrive in New England toward the end of April, and begin to build in May their nests of mud and grass, familiar to every farmer's boy. These are placed on the rafters in the interior of barns, less frequently under the eaves, and contain from four to six eggs, white in color, marked with purplish and brown. Two broods are often raised. There is no more pleasing sight than a wide barn window, or open door, through which parents constantly pass to their nests, while others twitter from the ridgepole or neighboring wires. The flight of this Swallow is extraordinarily graceful and swift; after the young have learned the use of their wings, the parents commonly feed them on the wing. An enormous number of insects are daily destroyed by these birds. In early September the Swallows depart, after gathering in great flocks before the southward flight. Most of them winter beyond the limits of the United States.

CEDAR BIRD. 16.

[AMPELIS CEDRORUM.]

Most of our birds are very largely creatures of habit, but the Cedar Bird wanders about in a fashion somewhat unaccountable, and though the breeding birds reach New England in May, yet they often put off nesting till the end of June or in early July. A few Cedar Birds occasionally pass the winter in New England, and there is always an inroad of these birds in February. The flocks that come at this time frequent the cedar pastures and feed on the berries; they move off in April and another horde arrives in May and remains till October. Beside the cedar berries, cherries, bayberries, the fruit of the tupelo and the hackberry form the favorite food of this bird in fall and winter, but in spring they destroy enormous quantities of cankerworms, and in August display great skill in catching flies. They spend all the year, with the exception of the few weeks when they are breeding, in flocks, which occasionally number several hundred birds. The evolutions which these perform, the separation and reunion of their various parts, and their appearance as they pitch down into some tree, are extremely beautiful. They often sit close together in rows or groups uttering a wheezy lisp. In mating season they have been seen to offer each other with peculiar bows and sidling motions, fruit or insects, which are then returned with the same gestures. The nest is large, loosely constructed of grass and twigs, and lined with grass, hair, or feathers. It is placed in a low tree, often in an apple or small evergreen, and contains four or five bluish white eggs, spotted with lilac and brown. The peculiar waxlike appendages which appear on the secondaries and sometimes on the tail feathers of the Cedar Bird, seem to bear no relationship to age or sex, and their presence is a mystery.

RED-EYED VIREO. 11.

[VIREO OLIVACEUS.]

There are probably few birds so abundant as this Vireo, which are so commonly overlooked by people in general. The appear-

ance of the bird, it is true, is in no way striking, but its disposition is so familiar, its home so often near our home, and above all its song so attractive and incessant, that our ignorance of its existence must be considered something of a reflection on our power of observation. The Redeye, as it is familiarly known, comes to New England in May, and until the end of August its song incessantly rises and falls from street trees, orchards and woodland. Its pensile nest, very familiar in the leafless woods in winter, is generally in a low forked twig. It is cleverly constructed of strips of bark, and generally lined with pine needles, often ornamented with bits of newspaper. Four white eggs, marked with brownish spots at the large end are laid in early June. The sitting bird allows a very near approach, her red iris being generally plainly visible, before she leaves the nest. The sexes are alike. The note of the bird, when alarmed or annoyed, is a characteristic complaining drawl, and in early summer they have a chatter. The song is a repetition of short phrases, with all manner of variations in inflection and form. It is cheerful and animated. The food of the Redeye consists of insects which are gleaned from the leaves and twigs; the service thus rendered by the bird is incalculable. The Redeyes leave New England in September, and most of them winter outside the United States.

BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER. 23.

[MNIOTILTA VARIA.]

This bird keeps so constantly in woodland that despite its peculiar and striking appearance, it is not well known. Its habit of searching for its insect food along the large limbs of trees, peering now over one side and then over the other, has also obtained for it the name Black and White Creeper. Like most of its family, it winters in tropical America, but it reaches New England toward the middle of April, when its peculiar song is heard in the leafless woods, *wee-sée*, *wee-sée*, *wee-sée*, very shrill and penetrating. The female is much less brightly marked than the male. The nest is

placed on the ground in rocky woods. The four or five eggs are white, covered with brown and reddish brown markings. The young birds leave the nest in the short period of seven days, and the family then join the wandering bands of woodland birds, till in September they begin their southward journey.

YELLOW WARBLER. 5.

[DENDRŒCA ÆSTIVA.]

This is probably the best known representative of the large and very attractive Warbler family. This bird, unlike the majority of the family, frequents gardens and the edges of streams and ponds, and its bright song and color render it more noticeable than many of its relatives. The Yellow Warbler reaches New England about the first of May, and soon has completed a neat cup-shaped nest of soft fibrous material, placed either in a fork of an apple tree or in some low bush. The eggs, from four to five in number, are grayish or greenish white, blotched or spotted with lilac or brown. The female is not as brightly colored as the male, and lacks the orange streaks on the breast. The song of the bird differs at different times, sometimes it is loud and shrill, at other times more gentle and plaintive. It sings constantly from its arrival to its departure, which takes place toward the end of August. The winter months are spent in tropical America. The Yellow Warbler's food consists chiefly of insects, which it seeks among the leaves with the restless activity characteristic of the family. The female frequently shows a high degree of intelligence in ridding herself of the egg which the Cowbird often lays in her nest. This she accomplishes by building another bottom over the intruder's egg and laying again. Three story nests have occasionally been found.

CATBIRD. 10.

[GALEOSCOPTES CAROLINENSIS.]

Thick shrubbery, particularly about houses or at the edges of water, are the favorite haunts of the Catbird. An old lilac or syringa will often shelter a pair year after year. The unmusical *mew* from which the bird gets its name, a deep *chuck* or a chatter, are often the only evidences of the bird's presence, for it is secretive, although not shy. The tail is constantly and adroitly used to express emotion. The nest is placed in the thicket, a few feet above the ground, and is rather large, composed of sticks lined with grape vine or cedar bark. The eggs, four or five in number, are of a lustrous bluish green. Two broods are sometimes raised. The Catbird has a fondness for fruit, which has brought it into disrepute among small-fruit growers, but the percentage of cultivated fruit eaten is very small, and it destroys each year great numbers of caterpillars and cutworms. The Catbird's fondness for the neighborhood of man, and its amusing tricks of voice and gesture recommend it to the protection of everyone. Its song, too, is freely poured forth and though too often marred by clownish tricks, is at its best a fine performance. It consists of a succession of separate and varied phrases, among which are often heard some which recall the Bobolink, Thrush or Whippoorwill. The Catbird spends the winter in the south, reaching New England in early May, and lingering among the fruit-laden hedgerows and thickets till October.

HOUSE WREN. 24.

[TROGLODYTES AËDON.]

The Wren, like the Bluebird and Martin, seems to be a true lover of country surroundings; when the houses become too thick, it moves away, but wherever orchards or wide dooryards separate the houses, it inhabits either the hollow knotholes or the boxes put up for his use. If these are not available, almost anything that is hollow will serve, — an old shoe or hat, or a water spout, all have

sheltered a brood of Wrens. The nest is composed of moss, sticks and straw which completely fill the hollow and in which on a lining of soft material the female lays from six to nine eggs, thickly marked with reddish brown. The male often builds other nests after the female has laid in the first, but no satisfactory explanation of this habit has been suggested. The pair defend their nest with great boldness, showing particular dislike to cats. Their note when excited, is a peculiar harsh chatter, but their song is voluble and pleasing. The sexes and young resemble each other. The food of the Wren consists of spiders and other insects. The Wren leaves New England in September for the Southern States, and returns in early May.

CHICKADEE. 8.

[PARUS ATRICAPILLUS.]

The Chickadee is a favorite with all classes, nor is it difficult to understand its claim to favor. Its disposition is cheerful, courageous and active, and its familiarity is greatest at the very time when winter has driven off nearly all bird-life. The roaming bands of Chickadees which frequent our orchards and yards at this season, may easily be induced to return at regular times to some tree whose situation will enable their interesting ways to be closely observed; by fastening a piece of suet or a large bone to the end of a limb, one may have a daily exhibition of their agility and be cheered by their lively notes. These winter bands are probably augmented in part by northern birds, for in the spring the numbers of this species seem to diminish. The birds now pair and resort to remoter orchards or woodlands, and there occupy a hollow stump which they line with warm materials, hair, moss and feathers, and on this the female lays six or more eggs. Often a natural cavity is used, but the birds frequently make one in a decaying birch stump. The eggs are white, spotted with reddish brown. The food of the Chickadee is made up of insects, their eggs and their larvae, which are gleaned from the bark and twigs,

and in fall and winter the fruit of the poison ivy, sumach and bayberry. The Chickadee utters in spring, and less frequently at other seasons, a sweet whistled *phee-bee*, the notes being of equal length and separated by a single interval. This when heard in the first warm days of February and March is often mistaken for the harsher, *phœ-be* of the Phœbe. Besides this note and the *tshe-dee-dee-dee*, which has given the bird its name, it has two other gurgling and lisping notes, and a simple *tsip*.

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET. 7.

[REGULUS SATRAPA.]

In the greater part of Eastern North America, the Kinglet is only a winter resident or migrant. Its home is in the spruce belt of the north, so that it is found in summer only in the forests of northern New England and New York. Here it constructs, in a low bough of some evergreen, a nest of moss and feathers in the shape of a ball, in which are laid from six to ten eggs, white, speckled with brown. Toward the end of September, the Kinglets and Brown Creepers arrive from the north, and although many pass southward of New England, many remain until April. They associate themselves with the Chickadees, and these mixed bands make regular visits to orchard, woodland, and the trees about houses, picking eggs and larvae from the bark. They have at this season a lisping note, *see*, *see*, *see*, and though not shy are often difficult to observe from their constant activity and fondness for evergreen trees. They are attractive, beneficial birds, and though little known, their dainty beauty deserves wider notice.

WOOD THRUSH. 6.

[TURDUS MUSTELINUS.]

Where the Hermit Thrush does not breed, this bird is without a rival in the power and beauty of its song. It frequents copses,

groves of young trees and rocky glens, particularly if there is a stream near by. The pair, which resemble each other, reach New England in the first week in May, and have finished their nest by the end of the month. The nest resembles that of the Robin, but is often composed of less coarse material, and is generally placed in the fork of a low tree. The four eggs are of the same shade of blue as those of the Robin. During the early morning and again toward evening, the male mounts some bough and pours forth his rich notes. In cloudy weather or deep woods the Thrush sings all day. The form of the song differs from that of either the Hermit Thrush or of the Veery, in its greater range. The last note of the opening phrase, *ee-o-lée*, is high and is often followed by a phrase which descends to a very low note. The call note is an unmusical guttural chatter. The Wood Thrush destroys many insects, and in the fall resorts to the wild cherry, viburnum, and other fruit, leaving for the south in September. On the ground this Thrush shows his relationship to the Robin, by his attitude in running and by his manner of feeding.

AMERICAN ROBIN. 20.

[MERULA MIGRATORIA.]

This well known and favorite bird, though a Thrush, received its name from a fancied resemblance to the European Robin. The arrival of the first Robin in March is one of the eagerly awaited signs of Spring, for though small flocks winter in the cedar groves even as far north as Massachusetts, the appearance of the males in the yards where they were bred, marks the end of winter. The song is familiar and, though not of the first order, is from its cheerfulness and the freedom with which it is delivered, deservedly popular. The Robin has besides, a loud *pip*, *pip*, or *peep*, *peep*, given singly or rapidly repeated, and a faint lisp like the Cedarbird's note. The females arrive soon after the males, and may be distinguished by their brown heads and duller breasts;

on their arrival the site for the nest is chosen, — generally the bough of some apple, spruce or maple near the house, though nests may be found in almost any tree. The nest, made of grass and mud, is too familiar to need description. The young are out by the end of May, when the excited calls of the parents are too often evidence of the destruction by cats of their young. The young are heavily spotted on the breast. In July and August the young of the first brood and the males resort, sometimes by thousands, to groves in low ground where they spend the night. The females are meanwhile brooding a second time. The Robin has often irritated fruit-growers by his pilfering; strawberries, cherries aud raspberries are carried off or damaged, but these fruits form, taking the whole year together, but a small part of the bird's food, for beside earthworms and wild berries, the Robin consumes vast numbers of cutworms and caterpillars. Even supposing the damage done by the Robin was not offset by these benefits, the world can better spare a little fruit, than the presence of this cheerful, handsome and musical bird.

BLUEBIRD. 21.

[SIALIA SIALIS.]

The Bluebird winters from southern Connecticut southward, and his first appearance in March has come to have for New Englanders a special significance. The soft call-note characteristic of both sexes and the rich warble of the male, combine with its exquisite coloring and confiding disposition, to win for the Bluebird a peculiar place in the hearts of all that are fortunate enough to know the bird. The Chickadee alone holds a warmer place in our hearts. The Bluebird frequents, on his arrival, orchards and open fields, where from fence-posts, bushes or low trees, he scans the ground, for some evidence of insect life. The flight to the ground, the fluttering of his wings as he seizes his prey, are very characteristic. The colors of the female are much duller than the males, and the young show but little blue and chestnut. The nest is placed in a hole, commonly

in an apple tree or bird-box, but often in fence posts or other hollow situation. It is composed of grass and feathers, and the eggs, four to six in number, are light blue. The males stop singing soon after the nest is constructed, but begin again in July, when the second brood is contemplated. In the fall the birds flock together, and their warble, in which the ear catches, perhaps from association, a tinge of sadness, is a characteristic sound of autumn. At this season and in winter, berries constitute a part of the Bluebird's food, but in summer it destroys countless beetles, cutworms and other insects.

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